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ABSTRACT

Both teacher and student editions of a guide for a tour of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, designed for students in an intensive English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) program at Temple University (Pennsylvania) are presented here. They were intended to provide a content-based tour of a local art museum for university ESL students that ESL teachers could teach with limited or no knowledge of art required. In the intensive ESL program, the tour is used both for a content-based field trip experience and in an elective course on the visual arts. The teacher guide contains teacher notes, a script to be read to students at the museum, and exercises for comprehension, description, recall, and discussion. The exercises focus on both appreciation of art and on daily living situations related to the trip, and include pre-visit, during-visit, and post-visit activities. In the teacher edition, teacher prompts and supplemental activities are also suggested. The student edition contains only the exercises. It is suggested that the activities could be adapted to any museum. (MSE)

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ED 394 339

Philadelphia Museum of Art ESL Activity-Instructor and Student Editions

Robert Preece with Glenn Tomlinson

Introduction

This ERIC Document consists of two editions: an instructor and student edition for an ESL-oriented trip to the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

These editions were written to address a need at Temple University's Intensive English Language Program (IELP): developing a content-based tour of a local art museum for our students that ESL teachers could teach, with limited or no knowledge of art required. Due to student difficulty in understanding tours designed for native speakers of English, we decided to develop a tour in which students could learn about American art, understand the language produced, and also practice their language skills and their new knowledge about art in a classroom and museum context.

At IELP, this tour has a dual purpose. First, it provides our general student population with an opportunity to participate in a content-based field trip experience at an art museum. Second, it provides one of four tours for IELP's content-based elective focusing on the visual arts in Philadelphia.

These editions can be approached in two ways. If you and your students are located in the Philadelphia area, then we encourage you to use these editions directly. Contact the Philadelphia Museum of Art to purchase slides and postcards of the art works discussed in these editions. However, these editions can also be adapted for use at other art museums. As the tour revolves around four kinds of art works which will be in almost any art museum, if you identify four comparable works, you can replace the works in these editions to fit another museum's context. The descriptions of the museum and the art works can be rewritten with the assistance of the museum's education division, and they also may be able to loan you slides and identify which paintings are reproduced on postcards.

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Philadelphia Museum of Art
ESL Activity - Instructor Edition

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Preface to Instructor

Throughout this text, instructor notes are italicized.

This ESL-oriented tour has the following content objectives: to introduce the collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art; to offer exposure to paintings by American artists; and to provide ESL students with a basic understanding of the changes in expressive options available to artists from the 19th to the 20th centuries. These options are simplified to include kinds of paintings: realistic, abstract, and non-representational. Basically, up until the middle of the 19th century, realistic pictures were the only option available to painters, but gradually the accepted possibilities opened up to include abstract, and then, non-representational art.

Realistic art is when you look at a picture, and the picture looks more or less real. Abstract art is when the woman looks flat, or has a green nose, or something that tells you the picture is "wrong" from a realistic standpoint. Non-representational art is when the artist crosses the line into art, that when you look at it, you don't see anything from our world. Instead, you only shapes, colors, lines, etc.

Between the Renaissance period (c.1300-1500) and the 19th century, artists in Europe developed methods for representing three-dimensional objects and spaces convincingly on a two-dimensional surface. These methods included one- and two-point perspective, the study of anatomy, and careful consideration of light and shadow as it falls upon objects in nature. Thomas Eakins' The Concert Singer, the first painting on the tour, falls within this context. Art employing these principles can be described generally by the term ***realistic****, although we should always remember that these kinds of adjectives for art are relative to the cultures that defines them.*

Towards the end of the 19th century, due to changes in technology (including the invention of the camera), changes in the art world relating to patronage and the development of an avant-garde, and artists' exposure to art from non-Western cultures, many European and American artists began to question the need to represent the world in a realistic manner. They adopted a variety of alternative types of painting dubbed ***abstract****. These works emphasize personal expression through color, line, shape, form, and texture over a camera-like accuracy. Abstract painting may range from distortions of the color or shapes of a recognizable subject (the other paintings on the tour fall into this context), to completely* ***non-representational*** *works that do not refer to the external world. A work by Cy Twombly that is optional for viewing at the end of the tour fits this context.*

If this vocabulary is new to you and you would like to know more, good sources on the subject are as follows:

Gilbert, R. 1995. Living with Art (4th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
Yenawine, P. 1991. How to Look at Modern Art. New York: Harry N. Abrams.

The tour has the following spatial components:

1. *Viewing the exterior of the building from in front of the museum. Looking at City Hall and the Philadelphia skyline. (optional)*
2. *Viewing Thomas Eakins' The Concert Singer in the First Floor, South Wing.*
3. *Viewing Ben Shahn's The Miner's Wife in the First Floor, South Wing.*
4. *Viewing Georgia O'Keeffe's Two Calla Lilies on Pink in the First Floor, North Wing.*
5. *Viewing Jackson Pollock's Male and Female in the First Floor, North Wing.*
6. *Trip to Museum Shop for purchase of postcards for follow-up activities.*

***NOTE**: Please call Glenn at (215) 684-7598 in advance of your tour. He will place your group visit on the Museum's schedule. He will also confirm that the works you wish to see are on view.*

Introduction to I. Pre-Visit Activities

The pre-visit activities provide an introduction to the museum as a building, vocabulary practice, a preview of the art works on the tour, and a dialogue which concerns American art museum etiquette.

I. Pre-visit Activities

This optional activity can either be used for reading comprehension before the trip, or it can act as an introduction to the tour and a listening comprehension exercise the day of the tour.

As a pre-visit activity, the passage could accompany four slides: (a) a view of the museum from the Parkway; (b) the Parthenon in Athens; (c) the Acropolis in Athens; and (d) a view of City Hall and the skyline from the top of the museum steps. You can borrow slides (a), (b), and (c) from the art/art history slide room.

As an introduction to the tour, the script should be read at the top of the museum steps.

Read the following passage. *(On student page 1.)*

The Philadelphia Museum of Art

Beginning in 1919, the Philadelphia Museum of Art (PMA) was built at the end of the new Benjamin Franklin Parkway. In 1928, the Museum opened to the people. Horace Trumbauer and other architects designed the building to look like ancient temples from Greece.

In fact, the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Acropolis in Athens, Greece, are similar. Both are set on hills and have many steps up to the their buildings. At the top of the steps, there are large terraces with great views of their cities. The buildings are made of stone, are used for public events, and are symbols of their cultures.

In Greece, the ancient temples were brightly painted, and the Museum's architects liked this idea. So, they painted the sculpture in the pediments (the space within the triangle that is created by the roof) of the North Wing.

At the corners of the Museum's roofs, there are bronze animals. They are called **griffins**. Griffins are animals from ancient Greek stories. In these stories, the griffins guarded important and expensive things in ancient Greek temples.

Inside the museum, you will see world-famous paintings and sculptures and rooms from different times in history. These rooms include medieval rooms (French and Italian), a Japanese teahouse, a Chinese temple, an Indian temple, and a 17th century French Empire room.

Also, the museum presents traveling exhibitions, lectures, concerts, and performances. At the Museum's entrance, you can get a monthly calendar of activities.

From the front of the museum, you will see great views of City Hall and downtown Philadelphia. Don't forget to bring your cameras!

Exercise 1: Comprehension and Discussion Questions *(On student page 2.)*

Answer and discuss these questions.

1. Are the PMA and the Acropolis similar? How?
2. Why did the architects paint the pediment sculpture of the North Wing?
3. What are griffins? Why do you think the architects put them on the PMA?
4. What things are in the PMA?
5. Besides looking at pictures and going on a tour, what other things can you do at the PMA?
6. Why should you bring your cameras?
7. In what movie(s) can you see the PMA? *Rocky*
8. Do art museums in your country look like this? Are they similar to the PMA? Why? Why not? *Many museums throughout the world have used Greco-Roman influenced architecture for museums. Not only in Europe and South America, but you will also find this influence in parts of Asia.*

Exercises 2 and 3 are designed to encourage students to use basic knowledge as a basis to talk about art, practice new art vocabulary, and to familiarize themselves with the pictures on the tour.

Exercise 2: What's the Title? *(On student pages 2-3.)*

For this exercise, show the slides in a random order.

For our tour, we will examine the works that are listed below.

Thomas Eakins. The Concert Singer. 1890-92.
Ben Shahn. Miners' Wives. 1948.
Georgia O'Keeffe. Two Calla Lilies on Pink. 1928.
Jackson Pollock. Male and Female. 1942.

You will now see four slides. What do you think is the title? Why?

1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____

3. _____

_____

4. _____

_____

_____

Review: Where is it? *(On student page 3.)*

The following words describe location. They will help you explain and understand the location of works on the tour. Draw pictures to show the following:

For most students, everything except foreground, middle ground, and background will be review. Focus on foreground, middle ground, and background, as it will facilitate comprehension throughout the tour activities.

For most works, we don't use middle ground. However, Ben Shahn's Miners' Wives has a clear middle ground.

Location for a flat surface:

top half/bottom half
at the top/in the middle/at the bottom
in the center/around the center
to the left/to the right
above/below
in the top left-hand corner/in the top right-hand corner/in the bottom left-hand corner/in the bottom right-hand corner

Location in depth:

foreground/middle ground/background

Exercise 3: Describing Subject Matter *(On student page 3.)*

Subject matter is the thing(s) that you see in a work.

On a sheet of paper, make three columns: foreground, middle ground, and background. Look at the following picture that will be shown on the tour. In pairs or small groups, take turns asking and answering the following questions. Choose one person to write down your group's answers on a separate sheet of paper.

Look at the four paintings from Exercise 2.

Show the four slides, one at a time. Students will probably need 5-10 minutes for each.

***NOTE**: Show each slide for up to ten minutes. Otherwise, you'll burn it.*

1. What's in the foreground, middle ground and background? Make a list and describe it: colors, shapes, things...
2. Where is it in the "ground"? Use **Review: Where is it?**
   Example: In Miners' Wives, there is a large woman in the foreground to the right.
3. For people, what are they doing?
4. For people, do they look happy, sad, angry? Why do you think so?

These questions work best with Miners' Wives and The Concert Singer. You may want to read the tour script before teaching this activity.

The Concert Singer: woman, arm, flowers and plant in foreground; green color in the background.
Miners' Wives: one wife in the foreground; woman with child, brick wall, coat, coat rack, and chair in the middle ground; two men wearing hats and building in the background (through the door).
*Two Calla Lilies on Pink: the two calla lilies are in the foreground. Depending on where you perceive the pink to be, either foreground or background is correct. But, the pink is certainly **behind** the lilies.*
Male and Female: everything is in the foreground except the light blue color to the left and right. The depth is caused by its location and color.

5. Do you think this picture tells a story? If so, what do you think the story is?

This question is used for inferencing. Tell students that they'll learn the answer during the tour.

Read the following passage.

What Kind of Art Work is it? *(On student page 4.)*

There are two kinds of art works: representational and non-representational. In representational works, you will see "something". The "something" may be a tree, a bird, a house, a person, etc. On the other hand, in non-representational works, you don't see "anything". You only see lines, shapes, colors, etc. The four pictures that you will see on the tour are representational. Jackson Pollock's Male and Female combines representational parts (the rounded curve of the woman and her eyes) with non-representational parts.

For representational works, we can divide them into two more categories: realistic and abstract, or works that don't look realistic.

Exercise 4: What Kind of Art Work is it? *(On student page 4.)*

Show the four slides, one at a time. Students should get 15-30 seconds for each.

Write the name of the paintings from Exercise 2 next to the correct category.

(The Concert Singer very realistic

_____ realistic

(Two Calla Lilies on Pink) has realistic and abstract qualities

(Miners' Wives) abstract

(Male and Female) very abstract

Students may place the works into categories either one slot above or below. However, they must explain their reasoning. If their reasoning sounds good, then it's okay.

Nightmare on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway *(On student pages 5-6.)*

The following dialogue, "Nightmare on Benjamin Franklin Parkway", attempts to approach a serious problem in a light way: getting our students to not get close to or touch the works of art.

For the dialogue, the students can act out the dialogue and use the slide image of the "damaged" work.

Read the following dialogue about a trip to a museum. Choose acting out the following characters: Student 1, Student 1's father, Teacher, Guide, Guards 1-4, Radio News Reporter, and Students 2+.

Scene 1: A classroom in Philadelphia.

(Student 1 is sleeping.)

Teacher: Okay, tomorrow we're going to go to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Remember, don't touch the paintings or sculpture. Don't point a pen or pencil at them. Don't even get close to them. Do you understand?

Students 2-25 (appearing bored): Yes, we understand.

Scene 2: A telephone call, about 24 hours later.

Student 1: Hello, Dad?

Student 1's father (happy and excited): Yes, how are you? Are you studying hard?

Student 1: Well, yes. But, Dad... I'm in jail.

Student 1's father: Jail! What! What happened? Are you okay?

Student 1: Well, I went to an art museum and...

Scene 3: About 3 hours earlier, at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Guide: And, in Male and Female, Jackson Pollock moves completely away from realism, and introduces a new kind of painting. Are there any questions about this work?

Student 1: Ah, yes, is this a woman or a man? (Student points a pen and scratches the painting.)

Guide: UGH!!! (Guide puts his head in his hands.)

Guard 1: HEY!!!

(Students 2-25 shriek.)

Guards 2, 3, and 4 run into the gallery. Alarm sounds.

Student 1: I'M SORRY!!!

Teacher: I told you to NOT go near the paintings!!!

Student 1: I'M REALLY SORRY!!!

Guard 1: (Puts handcuffs on the student.) Come with us. You have the right to remain silent. Anything that you say, can be used against you...

Scene 4: Somewhere, a radio news reporter reports the news.

Radio News Reporter: Today, at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, an international student seriously damaged a famous painting by Jackson Pollock. Police think that he is a member of No More Abstraction, a group that hates abstract art. He is now in jail, and he will see a judge next week.

The damage is estimated at ...

Scene 5: Same as Scene 2, a phone call.

Student 1's father (shocked): What? I don't understand. You should have been more careful. Well, how much is the damage?

Student 1: Uh, uh, $60,000 dollars.

Student 1's father: $60,000 DOLLARS!!!

Exercise 5: Comprehension Check and Discussion Questions *(On student page 7.)*

Answer and discuss these questions.

1. Did the student hear the teacher's warning? Why not?
2. What kind of behavior is acceptable at an art museum here? In your country?
3. How much was the damage to the painting? Why do you think it might cost this much? How much are paintings in museums usually worth?
4. Why do guards in some countries usually get nervous when visitors get too close to a work? What do you think their job responsibilities are?
5. Would you protect the paintings and provide public viewing differently? How?
6. What do you think should happen to Student 1?

Supplemental Activities

A. In addition, you might consider giving advanced students some authentic reading. In Rita Gilbert's Living with Art, mentioned on page 3 of the Instructor Edition, one-page biographies of Georgia O'Keeffe and Jackson Pollock are provided. Also, there are descriptions of The Concert Singer and Miners' Wives.

B. With museum maps, you can create map reading exercises and preview the organization of the collection.

II. The Tour: Four Paintings by American Artists 1890-1942

The following is an abbreviated tour script which covers the majors objectives of the tour: (a) to develop visual and listening skills; (b) to develop an understanding of the kinds of art that artists can make; (c) to provide a content-based learning experience at an art museum for the ESL learner.

For a more authentic experience, you could ask Glenn Tomlinson to give the tour. He can answer the variety of questions that students may ask while the tour is taking place!

Four Paintings by American Artists 1890-1942

> > The Concert Singer is located in room 116 in the North Wing. When speaking > > about the work, try to use non-verbal gestures when appropriate, ***but do not > > wave or gesture close to the painting.***

> > Preview listening comprehension questions which address The Concert Singer in > > the Tour Exercise.

Tour Exercise: Listening Comprehension *(On student pages 8-9.)*

In this tour, you will hear about four paintings that are important to the development of 20th century American art. Listen and write down the important information.

Thomas Eakins. The Concert Singer. 1890-92.

What is the woman's name?
Where is the light coming from?
How did Eakins make her look realistic?

In this tour, we will look at four paintings from Realism to Abstraction. This will give you a general history of American art from 1890 to today.

When we look at American art from the 19th century to the 20th century, we see many different kinds of pictures. Some pictures are realistic, in other words the pictures look similar to a photograph. However, others, which we will see later, do not look realistic. These pictures are abstract.

For example, we'll start with an earlier picture. This is Thomas Eakins' The Concert Singer, painted from 1890-1892. Thomas Eakins was born in Philadelphia, and he liked to paint Philadelphians. He painted people that he admired: athletes, doctors, and performers. In this picture, he painted Weda Cook, a 23 year old woman. At that time, she was a professional singer in Philadelphia.

In this picture, in the foreground, we see a concert singer singing alone on a stage, and she is wearing a formal pink dress. To the bottom left, we see a conductor's hand, while to the bottom right, there are pink flowers on the stage. Above the conductor's hand, we see part of a palm tree. Meanwhile, in the background, we see light grey and green color to the left, and dark grey and green color to the right.

There is a strong light that comes from the bottom right-hand corner of the picture. This light shines brightly on the left side of her pink dress.

> > You may want to turn around to show them "her" left and right.

It also lights up the left side of her left arm, and the left side of her face. Meanwhile, her right side is darker. If we look at her right side, the colors of her dress, arm, and face are painted with darker colors than her left side. Also, there is a shadow of her body to her right, and in the background, the light lights up the left side, and the right side is in darkness.

In this work, Eakins made a very realistic picture. He did this by using light, color, and shape. Her shape appears real. His use of light makes her look round, and the color looks real- like we see things in light.

> > Any student questions? Give students time to answer the questions in the Tour > > Exercise.

Now, imagine that you are an artist, and you've spent many years looking at paintings, and year after year, you've looked at realistic landscapes, realistic animals, realistic bowls of fruit, and a lot of realistic people, and these realistic people are doing realistic things. And these paintings are not hundreds, but thousands. Year after year, you only see realistic paintings.

Well, in the 20th century, artists decided that they wanted to make new kinds of paintings. They could be abstract, in other words when we see the picture, we see things (a house, a bird, a tree), but the color and/or the shapes are not realistic. Or the paintings could be non-representational, in other words we don't see things in the picture. Instead, we only see lines, shapes, and color. These new kinds of pictures create even more possibilities for the artist.

> > Miners' Wives is located in room 119. Preview student questions in the Tour
> > Exercise on student page 9.

Ben Shahn. Miners' Wives. 1948.

What is the specific story of the picture?
In general, what is Shahn criticizing?
What abstract qualities does this painting show?

In our second picture, did Ben Shahn want to make a realistic picture? Why do you think so? Is there light? Is the color realistic? Do the people look round?

In Shahn's picture, in the foreground, there is a woman to the right. In the middle ground, there is a woman holding a child. Behind them, there are brown pants and a coat hanging on a coat rack against a brick wall. The woman appear to be in a work room.

These women don't look happy. The woman in the foreground looks worried. Her eyes look away from us and she has dark circles under her eyes. The other woman looks down at the floor away from the child. The child is even staring out.

In the background, through the open door, we see two men who are wearing suits and hats in front of a large red and black building. We only see their backs.

Who do you think the large woman is?
Who are the men?
Where are they?

Look at the title.

What is a miner?
Do the women look happy? Why not? What do you think happened?

In 1947, there was an explosion in a coal mine in Illinois. The explosion killed over 100 men. Government and company corruption caused the accident. The explosion should not have happened.

Here, Ben Shahn tells a story about the miners' wives. They are waiting to hear about their husbands. By choosing this story, Ben Shahn is criticizing dangerous working conditions and government and business corruption.

Shahn wanted to express the feelings of these women. The women and their husbands are victims. The woman in the foreground has sickly grey skin, her eyes are solid black dots, her hands are large and heavy. Also, we look at her face because her dress looks similar to the floor.

In this painting, Shahn uses abstraction to create more feeling. If it were like a photograph, there would be less feeling. This way, we look at the most important part, her face and her pain.

> > Any student questions? Give students time to answer the questions in the Tour
> > Exercise.

> > Two Calla Lilies on Pink is located on the other side of the museum in room 172.
> > Preview questions in the Tour Exercise on student page 10.

Georgia O'Keeffe. Two Calla Lilies on Pink. 1928.

What size are the flowers?
Why did O'Keeffe make them this size?

Our third picture is by Georgia O'Keeffe. The title is Two Calla Lilies on Pink, and it was painted in 1928. In this work, she presents two ordinary flowers. Behind the flowers, there is a pink flower-like background.

Now, let's compare the flowers in The Concert Singer to the flowers in this work. In The Concert Singer, the most important thing was the singer. She was very big and in the middle of the painting. The flowers were small, and on the stage in the bottom left-hand corner. However, here the flowers are very large. And the painting is only flowers. In fact, they are larger than in real life.

By 1928, there were a lot of machines in the United States. What machines make things look bigger? The telescope, the microscope, and the camera. O'Keeffe married a very important photographer named Alfred Stieglitz, and photography interested her. Also, advertisements sometimes make small things look bigger. Why do they do this? They want you to look at something small in a new, interesting way. Then, maybe you will buy it.

O'Keeffe wanted us to look at the beauty of a small part of life, a flower. She did this by making the flowers very large, and they are the only "things" in the work.

In fact, the picture may be more beautiful than a real flower. Here, O'Keeffe changes the color to make the picture more beautiful. So this work has both realistic and abstract qualities.

> > Any student questions? Give students time to answer the questions in the Tour
> > Exercise.

> > Male and Female is located in room 174. Preview student questions in the Tour
> > Exercise on student page 10.

Jackson Pollock. Male and Female. 1942.

Was Pollock interested in creating a realistic picture? What did he want to do?
Which is the man? How do you know?
Which is the woman? How do you know?

This is our last picture for this tour, Jackson Pollock's Male and Female painted in 1942. This work is the most abstract work that we will see on this tour. In Eakins' picture, we saw a woman. In Shahn's picture, we saw two women and a child, and two men in the background. But, what do we see here? Can you see a man? Can you see a woman?

First, do you see symbols? In the foreground, to the left, we see curves and eyelashes. So, maybe this is the woman. To the right, we see a rectangle, so, if that's a woman, then maybe this is a man. But maybe this is all wrong! Maybe that's a man and that's a woman! Jackson Pollock did not want to make this clear. Why do you think he made this painting?

(Various student responses)

Jackson Pollock was trained in realistic painting, but after his study, he didn't want to make realistic works. Instead, he wanted to make very abstract, and later, non-representational paintings. He wanted his art to express energy, and to express feelings that cannot be seen in everyday life.

In this work, Pollock creates a highly abstract image with a lot of dark color. He wanted to show energy and make an unusual picture of lines, shapes, and colors. The subject, the male and the female are not realistic. Instead, they are symbols of two halves. When you put the two halves together, they become one. They are like ying and yang.

> > Any student questions? Give students time to answer the questions in the Tour
> > Exercise.

> > (Optional) Go into the Cy Twombly room (room 185), and take a look at art that
> > is non-representational. A brochure describing his concept is located right
> > outside the room.

Before you leave the museum, go to the Museum Shop and buy the postcards for the four paintings on the tour. You will need them for the next class.

Supplemental Activity

Ask students to locate one or two works of art reproduced on a postcard and take notes about the subject matter, the kind of art work, some basic information from the card next to the work, and their reasons for choosing this work.

III. Post-visit Activities

Exercise 1: Comprehension and Discussion Questions *(On student page 10.)*

1. Which picture is the most abstract? Realistic? How did the artists do this?
2. Which pictures show women? Men?
3. Which pictures have the color red?
4. Which pictures were painted after 1930?
5. Which pictures were created by men? Women?
6. Which picture criticizes something in America?
7. Which picture would you put in your living room? Why?
8. Which work do you think is the most popular? Why?
9. Which works look like art in your country? Explain.

Exercise 2: Oral Presentations *(On student page 10.)*

For your oral presentation, your teacher will divide you into pairs. Choose the following comparisons:

Eakins/Pollock
Eakins/Shahn
Eakins/O'Keeffe
Shahn/Pollock
Shahn/O'Keeffe
O'Keeffe/Pollock

For your oral presentation, compare the subject matter and the kind of picture. Each pair must divide the presentation in half.

Try to use as many comparatives as possible:

-er
more/less
meanwhile
while
whereas
neither, nor
on the other hand
both

Supplemental Activities

A. Ask students to write a message about the trip on one of the postcards to a friend who understands English.

B. From the supplemental activity for the tour, ask students to present the work(s) they selected to small groups in the class.

Philadelphia Museum of Art
ESL Activity - Student Edition

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Museum Education
Philadelphia Museum of Art

I. Pre-visit Activities

Read the following passage.

The Philadelphia Museum of Art

Beginning in 1919, the Philadelphia Museum of Art (PMA) was built at the end of the new Benjamin Franklin Parkway. In 1928, the Museum opened to the people. Horace Trumbauer and other architects designed the building to look like ancient temples from Greece.

In fact, the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Acropolis in Athens, Greece, are similar. Both are set on hills and have many steps up to the their buildings. At the top of the steps, there are large terraces with great views of their cities. The buildings are made of stone, are used for public events, and are symbols of their cultures.

In Greece, the ancient temples were brightly painted, and the Museum's architects liked this idea. So, they painted the sculpture in the pediments (the space within the triangle that is created by the roof) of the North Wing.

At the corners of the Museum's roofs, there are bronze animals. They are called **griffins**. Griffins are animals from ancient Greek stories. In these stories, the griffins guarded important and expensive things in ancient Greek temples.

Inside the museum, you will see world-famous paintings and sculptures and rooms from different times in history. These rooms include medieval rooms (French and Italian), a Japanese teahouse, a Chinese temple, an Indian temple, and a 17th century French Empire room.

Also, the museum presents traveling exhibitions, lectures, concerts, and performances. At the Museum's entrance, you can get a monthly calendar of activities.

From the front of the museum, you will see great views of City Hall and downtown Philadelphia. Don't forget to bring your cameras!

Exercise 1: Comprehension and Discussion Questions

Answer and discuss these questions.

1. Are the PMA and the Acropolis similar? How?
2. Why did the architects paint the pediment sculpture of the North Wing?
3. What are griffins? Why do you think the architects put them on the PMA?
4. What things are in the PMA?
5. Besides looking at pictures and going on a tour, what other things can you do at the PMA?
6. Why should you bring your cameras?
7. In what movie(s) can you see the PMA?
8. Do art museums in your country look like this? Are they similar to the PMA? Why? Why not?

Exercise 2: What's the Title?

For our tour, we will examine the works that are listed below.

Thomas Eakins. The Concert Singer. 1890-92.
Ben Shahn. Miners' Wives. 1948.
Georgia O'Keeffe. Two Calla Lilies on Pink. 1928.
Jackson Pollock. Male and Female. 1942.

You will now see four slides. What do you think is the title? Why?

1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____

3. _____

_____

4. _____

_____

_____

Review: Where is it?

The following words describe location. They will help you explain and understand the location of works on the tour. Draw pictures to show the following:

Location for a flat surface:

top half/bottom half
at the top/in the middle/at the bottom
in the center/around the center
to the left/to the right
above/below
in the top left-hand corner/in the top right-hand corner/in the bottom left-hand corner/in the bottom right-hand corner

Location in depth:

foreground/middle ground/background

Exercise 3: Describing Subject Matter

On a sheet of paper, make three columns: foreground, middle ground, and background. Look at the following picture that will be shown on the tour. In pairs or small groups, take turns asking and answering the following questions. Choose one person to write down your group's answers on a separate sheet of paper.

Look at the four paintings from Exercise 2.

1. What's in the foreground, middle ground and background? Make a list and describe it: colors, shapes, things...
2. Where is it in the "ground"? Use **Review: Where is it?**
   Example: In Miners' Wives, there is a large woman in the foreground to the right.
3. For people, what are they doing?
4. For people, do they look happy, sad, angry? Why do you think so?
5. Do you think this picture tells a story? If so, what do you think the story is?

Read the following passage.

What Kind of Art Work is it?

There are two kinds of art works: representational and non-representational. In representational works, you will see "something". The "something" may be a tree, a bird, a house, a person, etc. On the other hand, in non-representational works, you don't see "anything". You only see lines, shapes, colors, etc. The four pictures that you will see on the tour are representational. Jackson Pollock's Male and Female combines representational parts (the rounded curve of the woman and her eyes) with non-representational parts.

For representational works, we can divide them into two more categories: realistic and abstract, or works that don't look realistic.

Exercise 4: What Kind of Art Work is it?

Write the name of the paintings from Exercise 2 next to the correct category.

_____ very realistic

_____ realistic

_____ has realistic and abstract qualities

_____ abstract

_____ very abstract

Nightmare on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway

Read the following dialogue about a trip to a museum. Choose acting out the following characters: Student 1, Student 1's father, Teacher, Guide, Guards 1-4, Radio News Reporter, and Students 2+.

Scene 1: A classroom in Philadelphia.

(Student 1 is sleeping.)

Teacher: Okay, tomorrow we're going to go to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Remember, don't touch the paintings or sculpture. Don't point a pen or pencil at them. Don't even get close to them. Do you understand?

Students 2-25 (appearing bored): Yes, we understand.

Scene 2: A telephone call, about 24 hours later.

Student 1: Hello, Dad?

Student 1's father (happy and excited): Yes, how are you? Are you studying hard?

Student 1: Well, yes. But, Dad... I'm in jail.

Student 1's father: Jail! What! What happened? Are you okay?

Student 1: Well, I went to an art museum and...

Scene 3: About 3 hours earlier, at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Guide: And, in Male and Female, Jackson Pollock moves completely away from realism, and introduces a new kind of painting. Are there any questions about this work?

Student 1: Ah, yes, is this a woman or a man? (Student points a pen and scratches the painting.)

Guide: UGH!!! (Guide puts his head in his hands.)

Guard 1: HEY!!!

(Students 2-25 shriek.)

Guards 2, 3, and 4 run into the gallery. Alarm sounds.

Student 1: I'M SORRY!!!

Teacher: I told you to NOT go near the paintings!!!

Student 1: I'M REALLY SORRY!!!

Guard 1: (Puts handcuffs on the student.) Come with us. You have the right to remain silent. Anything that you say, can be used against you...

Scene 4: Somewhere, a radio news reporter reports the news.

Radio News Reporter: Today, at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, an international student seriously damaged a famous painting by Jackson Pollock. Police think that he is a member of No More Abstraction, a group that hates abstract art. He is now in jail, and he will see a judge next week.

The damage is estimated at ...

Scene 5: Same as Scene 2, a phone call.

Student 1's father (shocked): What? I don't understand. You should have been more careful. Well, how much is the damage?

Student 1: Uh, uh, $60,000 dollars.

Student 1's father: $60,000 DOLLARS!!!

Exercise 5: Comprehension Check and Discussion Questions

Answer and discuss these questions.

1. Did the student hear the teacher's warning? Why not?
2. What kind of behavior is acceptable at an art museum here? In your country?
3. How much was the damage to the painting? Why do you think it might cost this much? How much are paintings in museums usually worth?
4. Why do guards in some countries usually get nervous when visitors get too close to a work? What do you think their job responsibilities are?
5. Would you protect the paintings and provide public viewing differently? How?
6. What do you think should happen to Student 1?

II. The Tour: Four Paintings by American Artists 1890-1942

Tour Exercise: Listening Comprehension

In this tour, you will hear about four paintings that are important to the development of 20th century American art. Listen and write down the important information.

Thomas Eakins. The Concert Singer. 1890-92.

What is the woman's name?

Where is the light coming from?

How did Eakins make her look realistic?

Ben Shahn. Miners' Wives. 1948.

What is the specific story of the picture?

In general, what is Shahn criticizing?

What abstract qualities does this painting show?

Georgia O'Keeffe. Two Calla Lilies on Pink. 1928.

What size are the flowers?

Why did O'Keeffe make them this size?

Jackson Pollock. Male and Female. 1942.

Was Pollock interested in creating a realistic picture? What did he want to do?

Which is the man? How do you know?

Which is the woman? How do you know?

Before you leave the museum, go to the Museum Shop and buy the postcards for the four paintings on the tour. You will need them for the next class.

III. Post-visit Activities

Exercise 1: Comprehension and Discussion Questions

1. Which picture is the most abstract? Realistic? How did the artists do this?
2. Which pictures show women? Men?
3. Which pictures have the color red?
4. Which pictures were painted after 1930?
5. Which pictures were created by men? Women?
6. Which picture criticizes something in America?
7. Which picture would you put in your living room? Why?
8. Which work do you think is the most popular? Why?
9. Which works look like art in your country? Explain.

Exercise 2: Oral Presentations

For your oral presentation, your teacher will divide you into pairs. Choose the following comparisons:

Eakins/Pollock
Eakins/Shahn
Eakins/O'Keeffe
Shahn/Pollock
Shahn/O'Keeffe
O'Keeffe/Pollock

For your oral presentation, compare the subject matter and the kind of picture. Each pair must divide the presentation in half.

Try to use as many comparatives as possible:

-er
more/less
meanwhile
while
whereas
neither, nor
on the other hand
both